

8/16/2018

Adam Lawson,

On March 23, 2017, you murdered my mother. I am writing to say that I forgive you. God has forgiven me for terrible things that I have done, and He has also commanded that I forgive. I must admit I have struggled a bit with this. I did not even know you existed before your arrest; you probably knew nothing of me before this letter. So what's the difference to us if I forgive you or not? I don't know all of what forgiveness means, but I believe now that a part of it is to try to bless you a bit. I want you to know that your life has value, that no matter what you've done or will do God can still do good in and through you.

I want to be honest, and I don't want to mislead you. You will either spend the rest of your life in prison, or you will be executed by lethal injection after a long time in the solitary confinement of death row, and I believe that the second possibility would be justice, would be right. No matter what though, God still loves you, and He can still give you a peace and a sense of purpose every day in jail, prison, and/or death row.

There is a King in the Old Testament, Manasseh II was his name, who killed his own children as a human sacrifice because he was afraid of an invading army and so he hoped for the help of some gods of war. He murdered his own children. And yet, the Bible says King Manasseh, "humbled himself"

greatly before the God of his fathers. He prayed to him, and God was moved by his prayer and heard his plea and brought him again to Jerusalem into his Kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD was God." (2 Chronicles 33:12-13) If God can forgive a man who killed his own kids, I think no one can say that they've done too many terrible things to be forgivener.

Adam, there is nothing you can do that God will not forgive. The rest of your life can be spent moving closer and closer to the God who made you, being empowered to serve Him no matter what your circumstances are, or it can be spent moving farther and farther away from Him, where you will never find peace, and the justice you experience after you die will be terrible. Move toward God. Please talk with the chaplain at the jail, or if you prefer you can respond to me. My church will make sure ~~you~~ get anything ^{you} send there:

Summit Church
735 Herndon Avenue
Orlando FL 32803

Or you can email me at giles@summitconnect.org.

One final thing. At some point soon, you may have the opportunity to talk to my father. You murdered his wife, and they loved each other very much. If you tell him the whole

truth of what you did, it will be very difficult and painful for both you and him, but it is the right thing to do. If I were in your position, I would be tempted to protect any people who helped me, even wondering if it would be another wrong to "snitch." Talk to someone wise about this, think and pray about it, but I believe that naming the people who helped you is truly good for them — the sooner they face justice, the sooner they have hope of getting right with God. It will also help my family. Believe me, if my father believes you are ~~lying~~ lying to him, he ~~will be~~ ^{if} will want to go to trial and pursue the death penalty far more than if you tell him the awful truth of why you were on my parents' street, who helped you, and why you killed his wife, my mother.

Why tell the terrible truth? What's the point? Like forgiveness, too many reasons to list, but a few are that it will help us protect more people like my mom, help people like you to be helped before they murder, and help us as your victim's family to heal. Don't prepare any story. Just tell him the truth of everything you remember.

With and under the grace of Christ,
Gerald Liles

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